

Rolling Hill Mill Road Bridge
(Grove Road Bridge)
Grove Road, spanning the East Branch
of the AuSable River
AuSable Forks
Essex County
New York

HAER No. NY-171

HAER
NY,
16-AUSFO,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
ROLLING HILL MILL ROAD BRIDGE (GROVE ROAD BRIDGE)
HAER No. NY-171

Location: Grove Road spanning the East Branch of AuSable River, Village of AuSable Forks (Town of Jay), Essex County, New York. Bridge is approximately 460 feet east of the intersection of East Forge Street and Route 9N.

UTM: N 4921300
E 605440
New York State Quad: Ausable Forks

Date of Construction: 1879

Style: Single span, pin-connected high Pratt truss.

Engineer/
Builder: Erected by the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company, Cleveland, Ohio.

Present Owner: Essex County.

Present Use and Condition: Bridge has periodically suffered damage from the ice jams common on the East Branch of the AuSable River. The most recent damage occurred in 1983. Although the floorbeams of the cantilevered sidewalk suffered extensive damage, the tapered ["V" shaped] floorbeams of the bridge "allowed the bridge to ride up and over the ice flow," according to the county engineer, and prevent damage from a direct collision with the ice. It is not known if the floorbeams were designed to produce this effect or if this is merely a fortuitous result of their tapered design. A loss of section in floorbeams and stringers and the general deterioration of the abutments, tension members, and connections resulted in the closing of the bridge during 1987. Before the bridge was closed it was posted for a ten ton load limit. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic is now carried across the East Branch of the AuSable River by a portable steel truss bridge erected adjacent to the iron truss bridge on the upstream side.

Significance: One of the older through Pratt truss bridges in New York State. This bridge was a very important link between the extensive iron, pulp, and paper processing district and the commercial and residential districts of the hamlet of AuSable Forks.

Materials of
Construction:

Pin-connected, through Pratt truss iron bridge. Stone abutments. Currently has seven I beam floor stringers. Wooden plank deck and single sidewalk cantilevered from bridge floorbeams.

Dimensions:

The Rolling Hill Mill Road Bridge is 114 feet long, and has eight truss panels. It has an out-to-out width of 22 feet, 2 inches, a width between the centerline of the trusses of 17 feet 1 inch, a curb-to-curb width of 16 feet, 4 inches, and a width between roadway guard rails of 15 feet, 6 inches. On the upstream side is a five foot wide sidewalk. The sidewalk floorbeams are cantilevered from the bridge floorbeams and held in place by steel brackets. The deck area of the bridge totals 2,500 square feet. The bridge deck has a vertical clearance of 14 feet at the center and 12 feet at the sides of the portal braces. A water line, encased in a square conduit, is mounted on the downstream side of the bridge.

Significant Ex-
terior Features:

Upper lateral bracing formed by four rods with threaded ends running diagonally from the corner of each bay to a small ring in the center, approximately six inches in diameter. On the inside of the ring, nuts threaded onto the end of each rod permit the adjustment of the upper lateral bracing within each bay. Bridge has stone abutments and inclined end posts with decorative portal bracing. Nameplate reads: "1879, Built by King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company, Cleveland, Ohio." Plate affixed to the inclined end post reads: "L. J. Bartlett, John Gibson, John Devlin, Commissioners." These are the names of the Town of Jay Highway Commissioners in office at the time the bridge was erected. A number of posts have iron channels with the word "Trenton" stamped onto them. It is most likely that either the New Jersey Steel and Iron Company of Trenton, New Jersey or the Trenton Iron Works produced and or fabricated these pieces. Announcements of bridge contracts appearing in both Engineering News and Railroad Gazette indicate that during 1879 and 1880 the New Jersey Steel and Iron Company fabricated bridge components for a number of bridges in the northeastern states.

Major Alterations
and Additions:

The bridge has been modified by the addition of a wooden deck sidewalk on the upstream side of the bridge outside of the truss. The floorbeams for this sidewalk are cantilevered from the bridge floorbeams and held in place by steel brackets.

Additional
Information:

Bridge was erected for the Town of Jay at a cost of \$1,700. On November 12, 1879, Jay's representative to the Essex County Board of Supervisors petitioned the Board for permission for the town to borrow the money to pay the debt incurred in building the bridge and to issue bridge construction bonds totaling \$1,700 and paying six percent annual interest. Three bonds, one each for \$700, \$600, and \$400 were issued with a redemption date of March 1, 1880, 1881, and 1882.

Project
Information:

The documentation of the Rolling Hill Mill Road Bridge was prepared by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), National Park Service, during the summer of 1987 for the New York State Historic Bridges Recording Project. This project was sponsored by the New York State Department of Transportation and under the supervision of Eric DeLony, Chief & Principal Architect, HAER. This report was written by Andrew Cole and Charles Scott. When citing this report, please credit the Historic American Engineering Record and the authors.

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